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# Influentia News



The National Influenza Vaccination Disparities Partnership (NIVDP) is comprised of multi-sector partners who work to promote flu vaccination among underserved populations including African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians/Alaska Natives. The partnership and this newsletter are supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## NIVDP Partners Educate On Importance Of Flu Vaccination

In this issue, we highlight events organized by NIVDP partners that focus on educating communities of vulnerable populations about the importance of annual flu vaccination.

Partner activities included:

- Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, held its second annual flu vaccination event in October, 2015;
- Multiple flu vaccination events coordinated by local churches in Minden, Louisiana on January 18, 23, and 27;
- Windsor Village United Methodist Church flu vaccination event in Houston, Texas, held on January 24;
- A NIVDP workshop hosted by the Immunization Partnership in Houston, Texas, on January 26; and
- Community event opportunities to promote flu vaccination in Flint, Michigan, held throughout February.

### SPOTLIGHTING PARTNERS

#### JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY HOLDS SECOND ANNUAL FLU VACCINATION EVENT

Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), a historically black university in Charlotte, North Carolina, partnered with the NIVDP for a second consecutive year to host a flu vaccination event for students and the community. JCSU utilized the Health Plex, an on-campus health facility, to promote and host the event. Health Services Director Marion Jones said, "We promoted the event where students congregate. We also sent email reminders to students and informed the community through the school newspaper. Because of the NIVDP, we were able to coordinate directly with a local Walgreens pharmacy." As a result of JCSU's outreach effort, approximately 45 students got their flu vaccinations during the event. These events are important because it brings together JCSU and the community. The University is committed to providing preventative health services to reduce missed class time or work days due to flu illness. Marion continued, "We plan to collaborate with Walgreens again next year to make this event bigger and better."



Johnson C. Smith University

#### CHURCHES COORDINATE MULTIPLE FLU VACCINATION EVENTS

The Shepherd's Hut Church, a new NIVDP partner located in Minden, Louisiana, coordinated flu vaccination events on January 18, 23, and 27. The Shepherd's Hut is a small non-denominational church led by Pastor Sam Mims. Pastor Mims collaborated with Bethel A.M.E. Church, Galilee Missionary Baptist Church and the NIVDP to provide flu vaccines to the predominately African American community. Pastor Mims, who is passionate about the health of his community, plans to coordinate another NIVDP event next flu season. "We've begun to educate the community about the benefits of the flu vaccine and we hope to build on the momentum from this year's event and make next year another success."



*Rev. Sam Mims, Pastor,  
Shepherd's Hut Church*

The work in Minden is part of the NIVDP's effort to expand into rural areas where access to flu vaccines is limited. Additional cities in the South that have been identified for NIVDP outreach in rural areas include Eatonton, Georgia, and Brandon, Mississippi.

## WINDSOR VILLAGE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PROVIDES FLU VACCINES FOR HIGH-RISK POPULATIONS



*Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell,  
Pastor, Windsor Village  
United Methodist Church*

The Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas, led by Pastor Kirbyjon Caldwell, has empowered its parishioners and the community for over 30 years. The church supports various projects that impact the social and economic landscape of Southwest Houston. These projects include the T3 Health and Wellness Ministry, which provides seminars that educate families on how to live physically, spiritually, and mentally healthy lives.

On January 24, the Windsor Village United Methodist Church partnered with the NIVDP to provide flu vaccines for high-risk populations, specifically adults with chronic health conditions, pregnant women, and seniors. A Walgreens pharmacist administered 57 vaccines and disseminated CDC's flu educational materials. "We look forward to continuing the mission to reach the least, the last, and the lost, so that everyone has access to the health services that they need" said Pastor Caldwell.



*Windsor Village United Methodist Church*

## THE IMMUNIZATION PARTNERSHIP HOSTS A NIVDP WORKSHOP

The Immunization Partnership, a NIVDP partner, hosted a workshop on January 26 at the United Way in Houston, Texas. Workshop participants included 23 local stakeholders who represented hospitals, health clinics, schools, community health organizations, pharmacies, health plans, and a foundation. The goal of the NIVDP workshop was to establish sustainable linkages with grassroots organizations, the local health department, and the immunization coalition to promote flu vaccination within the Hispanic community.

During the workshop, stakeholders discussed barriers to flu vaccination, including common misconceptions about the flu vaccine. Further discussion around communication best practices revealed the importance of engaging grassroots gatekeepers to effectively reach Hispanic populations, including faith leaders and local consulates. Additionally, grandmothers were mentioned as trusted messengers, as younger generations still believe "what grandma says." Several stakeholders emphasized that elders have an emotional connection with young people that can make messages resonate. Participants also requested CDC provide more flu and flu vaccine-specific social media content beyond traditional CDC health observances, like National Influenza Vaccination Week or National Immunization Awareness Month.

The NIVDP welcomes new partners of the NIVDP, and thanks each stakeholder for their commitment to participate in monthly conference calls, identify local media spokespeople, and organize flu vaccination events. New partners include:

- Vecino Health Centers
- Randalls/Albertsons Grocery Store
- Houston Independent School District health and wellness centers
- Community Health Choice
- El Centro de Corazón
- City of Houston Department of Public Health
- Texas A&M University
- Kelsey Seybold Clinic
- San Jose Clinic



The NIVDP will use the stakeholders' recommendations to develop new communications tools, engagement strategies, and linkages for sustainable partnership building practices. "I felt very motivated when I left the meeting," shared Robyn Correll Carlyle, Immunization Partnership Education Program Manager. "We enjoy being a part of the NIVDP, have shared resources and messages with our own local partners, and pledge to continue doing so."



THE  
IMMUNIZATION  
PARTNERSHIP

## NIVDP PARTNERS FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE FLU VACCINATION

NIVDP partners in Flint, Michigan, continue to identify new ways to promote flu vaccination beyond National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) through other health-related events. For example, health events have been held throughout the community due to the Flint water crisis in Michigan. When NIVDP partners in Flint were asked to support the lead screening for the Latino/Hispanic community, partners saw this as an opportunity to also educate the community about flu vaccination and provide flu vaccines. NIVDP partner Royal Priesthood Ministries, located in Flint, held a flu vaccination event on February 6. During this event, health educators, accompanied by Spanish-language translators, provided one-on-one consultations. The consultations advised families of opportunities for lead testing, flu vaccinations, and healthcare enrollment. NIVDP partners posted and disseminated CDC flu vaccination materials in both Spanish and English.

"Developing programs like this is very important to the community. It is a great way to provide access to these services," said San Juana Olivares-Macias, Genesee County Hispanic Latino Collaborative Chair.

Local NIVDP partners also looked beyond NIVW by promoting flu vaccination during African American History Month in February. In partnership with Genesee County Health Department, Genesee Health Plan, Molina Healthcare, and the NIVDP, partners participated in the "Sharing Your Health Heritage" event on February 25 at Ebenezer Ministries in Burton, Michigan. The event involved a dynamic discussion with the community on health services, family health histories, how to make informed health decisions, lead screenings, and the importance of flu vaccination. CDC flu vaccination materials were also distributed.

